Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Everolimus

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it's used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Afinitor; Afinitor Disperz; Zortress

Brand Names: Canada

Afinitor; Afinitor Disperz; NAT-Everolimus; PMS-Everolimus; SANDOZ Everolimus; TEVA-Everolimus

Warning
Zortress®

- This drug may raise the chance of very bad and sometimes deadly infections. Talk with the doctor.
- This drug may raise the chance of getting cancer like lymphoma or skin cancer. Call your doctor right away if you have a change in color or size of a mole, a skin lump or growth, a big weight loss, night sweats, or swollen glands.

- In people who have had a kidney transplant, the risk of a blood clot in your kidney transplant may be raised. This may lead to loss of the kidney. Most of the time, this has happened within the first 30 days after the kidney transplant. Call your doctor right away if you have back, groin, or belly pain; are not able to pass urine; have blood in your urine, dark urine, a fever, or an upset stomach; or you are throwing up.
- If you are taking this drug with cyclosporine, you will need a lower dose of cyclosporine. Talk with your doctor.
- This drug is not to be used if you have had a heart transplant. More deaths were seen in people taking this drug after a heart transplant. Talk with your doctor.

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to treat cancer.
- It is used to treat certain kinds of kidney cysts.
- It is used to keep the body from harming the organ after an organ transplant.
- It is used to help control certain kinds of seizures.

- It may be given to you for other reasons. Talk with the doctor.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have an infection.
- If you have been told that your body has problems with certain sugars (lactose, glucose, galactose). Some products have lactose.
- If you take any drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) that must not be taken with this drug, like certain drugs that are used for HIV, infections, or depression. There are many drugs that must not be taken with this drug. Your doctor or pharmacist can tell you if you are taking a drug that must not be taken with this drug.
- If you are taking another drug that has the same drug in it.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. This drug may cause harm to an unborn baby. A pregnancy test will be done before you start this drug to show that you are NOT pregnant. If you may become pregnant,

you must use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Ask your doctor how long to use birth control. If you get pregnant, call your doctor right away.

- If you are breast-feeding. Do not breast-feed while you take this drug. You may also need to avoid breast-feeding for some time after your last dose. Talk with your doctor to see if you need to avoid breast-feeding after your last dose.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?
All products:

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- You may have more of a chance of getting an

infection. Some infections have been severe or deadly. Wash hands often. Stay away from people with infections, colds, or flu.

- High blood sugar has happened with this drug. This includes diabetes that is new or worse.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- Tell your doctor if you have signs of high blood sugar like confusion, feeling sleepy, unusual thirst or hunger, passing urine more often, flushing, fast breathing, or breath that smells like fruit.
- This drug may cause high cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Talk with the doctor.
- Avoid grapefruit and grapefruit juice.
- Mouth irritation and mouth sores are common with this drug. These side effects may happen as early as a few days after getting this drug. Do what your doctor or other health care provider tells you to prevent mouth irritation or mouth sores. Call your doctor if mouth irritation or mouth sores get very bad, bother you, or do not go away.
- Very bad and sometimes deadly kidney problems have happened with this drug. Call your doctor right away if you are unable to pass urine or if you have blood in

the urine or a change in the amount of urine passed.

- Some people have had lung problems with this drug. Sometimes, this has been deadly. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of lung problems like shortness of breath or other trouble breathing, cough that is new or worse, or fever.
- If you are 65 or older, use this drug with care. You could have more side effects.
- This drug may affect fertility. Fertility problems may lead to not being able to get pregnant or father a child. If you plan to get pregnant or father a child, talk with your doctor before taking this drug.
- If your sex partner may get pregnant, you must use birth control while taking this drug and for some time after the last dose. Ask your doctor how long to use birth control. If your partner gets pregnant, call the doctor right away.

Zortress®

- The chance of skin cancer may be raised. Avoid lots of sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds. Use sunscreen and wear clothing and eyewear that protects you from the sun.
- In people who have had a liver transplant, the risk of a blood clot in the liver transplant may be raised. This

may lead to loss of the liver or death. Most of the time, this has happened within the first 30 days after the liver transplant. Talk with the doctor.

- Some people treated with this drug have had very bad kidney problems caused by a certain viral infection (BK virus). In people who have had a kidney transplant, BK virus infection may cause loss of the kidney. Call your doctor right away if you have signs of kidney problems like change in the amount of urine passed, difficulty or pain when passing urine, or blood in the urine.

All other products:

- Avoid being near anyone who has had a recent live vaccine. There are many types of live vaccines. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure.
- If you have had or will be having radiation treatment, talk with your doctor. Worse side effects from radiation treatment have happened with this drug.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following

signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

All products:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of infection like fever, chills, very bad sore throat, ear or sinus pain, cough, more sputum or change in color of sputum, pain with passing urine, mouth sores, or wound that will not heal.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of electrolyte problems like mood changes; confusion; muscle pain, cramps, or spasms; weakness; shakiness; change in balance; an abnormal heartbeat; seizures; loss of appetite; or severe upset stomach or throwing up.
- Redness or irritation of the palms of hands or soles of feet.

- A burning, numbness, or tingling feeling that is not normal.
- Flushing.
- Chest pain.
- Any unexplained bruising or bleeding.
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat.
- Dizziness or passing out.
- Seizures.
- Muscle pain or weakness.
- Period (menstrual) changes. These may include a missed period.
- Mood changes.
- Change in the way you act.
- Swelling.

Zortress®

- A severe brain problem called progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) may happen with this drug. It may cause disability or can be deadly. Tell your doctor right away if you have signs like confusion, memory problems, depression, change in the way you act, change in strength on 1 side is greater than the other, trouble speaking or thinking,

change in balance, or change in eyesight.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Pimples (acne).
- Feeling tired or weak.
- Headache.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, upset stomach, throwing up, or decreased appetite.
- Change in taste.
- Weight loss.
- Dry mouth.
- Dry skin.
- Change in nails.
- Hair loss.
- Joint pain.
- Back pain.

- Pain in arms or legs.
- Muscle spasm.
- Nosebleed.
- Nose or throat irritation.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

All products:

- Take with or without food but take the same way each time. Always take with food or always take on an empty stomach.
- Keep taking this drug as you have been told by your doctor or other health care provider, even if you feel well.

- Take this drug at the same time of day.
- Talk with your doctor before getting any vaccines. Use of some vaccines with this drug may either raise the chance of an infection or make the vaccine not work as well.
- This drug may affect how wounds heal. If you need to have surgery, you may need to stop this drug before surgery. Start taking it again after surgery as you have been told by your doctor. Call your doctor right away if you have a wound that does not heal or any other wound problems.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.

Tablets:

- Take with a full glass of water.
- Swallow whole. Do not chew, break, or crush.
- Some products come in blister cards. Some blister cards may have blisters with desiccants in them. A desiccant helps protect the drug from moisture and should not be eaten. If your drug comes in blister cards, be sure you know if any of the blisters have a desiccant in them. Do NOT take the desiccants. If you are not sure or you have questions, talk with your pharmacist.

Disperz tablets:

- Take as a liquid only. Do not swallow tablets whole.
- Wear gloves when touching this drug.
- Mix with water as you have been told before drinking.
- Drink right after mixing. Throw away any part not used after 1 hour.
- If possible, a person who is pregnant or plans to get pregnant must not mix this drug. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.

Zortress®

- If you take cyclosporine or tacrolimus, take them at the same time as this drug.

What do I do if I miss a dose?
Zortress®

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it is close to the time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

All other products:

- Take a missed dose as soon as you think about it.
- If it has been 6 hours or more since the missed dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your normal time.
- Do not take 2 doses at the same time or extra doses.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- Store at room temperature protected from light. Store in a dry place. Do not store in a bathroom.
- Store in original container.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.
- Some drugs may have another patient information

leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. Check with your pharmacist. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider’s examination and assessment of a patient’s specific and unique circumstances. Patients

must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

Last Reviewed Date

2024-03-08

Copyright

© 2024 UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates and/or licensors. All rights reserved.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

Everolimus - Last updated on December 12, 2022
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center